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Coordination, programme and other questions: calendar of conferences in the economic, social and related fields

Letter dated 28 June 2001 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

In response to the Council's invitation set forth in its decision 1988/103 of 5 February 1988, the Committee on Conferences met on 22 June 2001 to review the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings for 2002 and 2003 in the economic, social and related fields (E/2001/L.9 and Add.1). The Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings and to provide, as appropriate, its recommendations thereon to the Council.

In introducing the provisional calendar, the Secretary of the Committee drew the attention to some important guidelines, also referred to in the preamble of the document, set out by General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions on the calendar of conferences and meetings. Those guidelines included the Council's decision to biennialize the sessions of its subsidiary bodies.

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* E/2001/100.

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It was noted that, once the calendar is adopted, no additional meetings representing departures from the biennial cycle would be authorized. Considering another important guideline, namely that subsidiary bodies should end their sessions at least eight weeks before the session of the Council to which they report, it was also noted that, despite a serious effort to follow that guideline, it could not have been observed fully, due to the extremely heavy meetings' schedule in 2002. In the preparation of the calendar, a careful consideration had been given to avoid scheduling meetings on Orthodox Good Friday, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/208 A of 18 December 1998.

The Committee's Secretary also referred to a number of amendments to the draft calendar, which will be included in E/2001/L.9/Add.1.

In summarizing the discussion of the item, the following observations and suggestions were made:

Concern was raised, regarding exceptions to biennialization and it was noted that a number of subsidiary bodies are yet to comply with the Economic and Social Council decision on biennialization. Consequently, further consideration of this issue is warranted.

The Committee further encouraged the Council to review the calendar as a whole in the context of its review of the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of its functional commissions and expert groups.

The Committee also noted that subsidiary bodies should end their sessions at least eight weeks before the session of the Council to which they report and that every effort was made in the preparation of the draft calendar to follow this guideline as much as possible.

The Committee referred to Council resolution 2000/22 of 28 July 2000, which indicates that the location of the meetings of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues can be Geneva or New York. Therefore, entries 125 in 2002 and 127 in 2003 will be amended in the calendar and reflected accordingly in E/2001/L.9/Add.1.

The Committee on Conferences recommends the adoption of the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council for 2002-2003, and recommends that the Council bear in mind the above observations and suggestions.

In closing, I would like to express the Committee's appreciation of the Council's invitation to review its draft calendar of conferences and meetings, and of the continued close cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Committee on Conferences.

(Signed) Abdelmalek Bouheddou
Chairman
Committee on Conferences